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National Context, Religiosity, and Volunteering: Results from 53 Countries

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To what extent does the national religious context affect volunteering? Does a religious environment affect the relation between religiosity and volunteering? To answer these questions, this study specifies individual level, contextual level, and cross-level interaction hypotheses. The authors test the hypotheses by simultaneously studying the impact of religiosity of individuals, the national religious context, and their interplay on volunteering while controlling for possible confounding factors both at individual and contextual levels. Based on multilevel analyses on data from 53 countries, frequent churchgoers are more active in volunteer work and a devout national context has an additional positive effect. However, the difference between secular and religious people is substantially smaller in devout countries than in secular countries. Church attendance is hardly relevant for volunteering in devout countries. Furthermore, religious volunteering has a strong spillover effect, implying that religious citizens also volunteer more for secular organizations. This spillover effect is stronger for Catholics than for Protestants, non-Christians and nonreligious individuals.

Church members generally are more involved in voluntary organizations than nonmembers (Becker and Dhingra 2001; Curtis, Baer, and Grabb 2001; Hodgkinson 2003; Lam 2002; Wilson and Janoski 1995).¹ Not only are membership rates among them higher, they are also more likely to volunteer. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that voluntary organizations often have religious backgrounds. This is not only true for the United States, where over one third of all volunteers is active in religious organizations (Boraas 2003). Even in more secular European societies, religious organizations are

among the most common voluntary organizations (Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995).

Although church members volunteer more than nonmembers, research suggests that volunteering is not driven by church membership, but instead by levels of church attendance (De Hart 1999; Hodgkinson, Weitzman, and Kirsch 1990; Watt 1991; Wilson and Musick 1997). Nominal members who never visit church and nonmembers volunteer equally often, whereas the highest volunteer rates are found among frequent churchgoers. Regular churchgoers are better integrated within religious networks than those who never attend church. Being part of such networks enhances the chance to volunteer (Bekkers 2003).

Nonmembers volunteer less. But, what if they are nested within a highly religious context? Most probably, in such a scenario, they have a considerable number of active church members amongst their family, friends, and acquaintances. Will this make them more likely to volunteer? We know that avid church members volunteer more because they are better integrated within religious networks (Bekkers 2003; Wilson and Musick 1997). They are more likely to know about voluntary organizations, more

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¹ Throughout this article, we use “church” also for non-Christian holy places (e.g., mosques and synagogues). Consequently, a non-Christian is also called a church member.

likely to be asked to participate (Bryant et al. 2003; Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000), and it will be harder for them to refuse such requests (Snow, Zurcher, Ekland-Olson 1980). However, it is unclear to what extent this network argument applies also to people who themselves never visit church. Are they affected by the religiosity of their social environment too? This would make the network explanation more general: being more strongly integrated within networks of religious people makes one more likely to volunteer. This should then hold for all people, not just for regular churchgoers.

The general network hypothesis implies differences between countries: citizens in more devout societies are more likely to associate with active church members (cf. Kelley and De Graaf 1997), which should increase their chance to volunteer. If the religious environment indeed is an important predictor, we expect not just higher volunteer rates in more devout societies (i.e. a composition effect), but also that all citizens of those societies—irrespective of their own religiosity—are more likely to volunteer. Hence, we predict that devoutness of society is positively related to participation level (i.e. a context effect). Secular people in devout countries should also volunteer more, since knowledge about volunteering reaches them more easily through their social networks and they are more likely to be recruited and motivated by the large number of religious fellow citizens. The national religious context effect could imply a dampened effect of individual religiosity in more devout societies, since people who do not attend church would be more likely to volunteer and frequent churchgoers would not have to invest much time to sustain high levels of volunteering.

Whether people's religious environment influences their volunteering becomes an important question if we consider that many industrialized countries secularized in the past decades (with the United States as a possible exception: cf. Norris and Inglehart 2004; De Graaf and Need 2000). If religiosity indeed is an important factor, secularization might result in declining volunteer rates for two reasons. First, the number of avid church members—the people who are most likely to volunteer—declines. Consequently, levels of volunteering could drop sharply. Second, while more and more people turn their back on the church, it becomes

increasingly less likely for nonmembers to have active church members within their social environment. This could, indirectly, cause a nation's volunteer rate to drop as well.

To test for effects of the national religious context, we have to study the impact of individual religiosity and national religious context simultaneously while controlling for confounding factors at both individual and contextual levels. This requires international comparative research. Smith (1994) and Wilson (2000) conclude in their overview articles that research on the impact of the context on individual volunteering is underdeveloped. Similarly, Curtis et al. argue that scholars paid little attention to developing "*theories of cross-national variation in association involvement*" (2001:784). Hodgkinson also concludes that "future research would greatly benefit from a stronger theoretical base to explain the differences in rates of volunteering across nations" (2003: 52). Up until now, international comparative research on voluntary association involvement (studying either memberships or volunteering, and sometimes both) has focused mainly on political and economic factors (e.g., Salamon and Sokolowski 2003; Hodgkinson 2003; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001). However, because we hypothesize that religion is a key factor, we propose that international comparative research on volunteering should take the national religious context into account as well. Although religion is included in some recent studies (Dekker and Van den Broek 1998; Halman 2003), these studies do not discriminate compositional from contextual effects. Curtis et al. (2001) do distinguish these effects and find that working memberships (religious organizations and unions excluded) vary with national religious composition.² Parboteeah, Cullen, and Lim (2004) also find a strong positive effect of the national religious context, but unfortunately they do not control for church attendance at the individual level. We try to add to this

² Exactly the same World Values Survey items on unpaid work for voluntary organizations are sometimes used to measure *working memberships* (e.g., Curtis et al. 2001), while in other cases they are said to measure (*formal*) *volunteering* (e.g., Halman 2003; Hodgkinson 2003; Parboteeah, Cullen, and Lim 2004). We address this issue in the data section.

research by providing new hypotheses on the influence of religious context and by testing them on a large-scale, international comparative dataset containing information on volunteering in 53 countries between 1981 and 2001.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Volunteering is a form of institutionalized, unpaid helping behavior that benefits other people, groups, or organizations (Hodgkinson 2003; Wilson 2000). Although such behavior could be beneficial to volunteers themselves, they certainly do not gain financially (Dekker and Halman 2003). Thus, to initiate volunteerism, people have to be motivated in another way. To understand why people volunteer, we build upon previous research distinguishing three types of explanations: (1) altruistic norms, (2) social networks, and (3) knowledge and skills.³ First, we elaborate on the relation between individual religiosity and volunteering. Subsequently, we specify hypotheses on effects of the national religious context.

HYPOTHESES ON INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOSITY AND VOLUNTEERING

Two general explanations for why church members volunteer more than nonmembers have been proposed. First, avid church members would have internalized the social norm of altruism (the intrinsic motivation to help others) more than nonmembers. Solidarity, love of one's neighbors, and self-sacrifice are important virtues promoted by the world's major religions (Wuthnow 1991:122). Religious people would acquire these altruistic norms in church and this would lead to an increased chance of volunteering. Second, according to the social network explanation, church members would volunteer more because their social network provides stronger recruitment and motivation functions. Given that members are part of close-

knit communities, they are more likely to know about existing voluntary organizations, it increases the chance that they are asked to participate (Bryant et al. 2003; Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000), and furthermore, the close-knit community makes it difficult to refuse such requests. Wilson and Musick refer to this network explanation when they argue that "most formal volunteers are persuaded to volunteer by family members, coworkers, or fellow worshippers" (1997:700). Thus, based on both the altruism and the network explanation, our hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Church members volunteer more than nonmembers.

The explanation that church members volunteer for altruistic reasons is under attack. Cnaan, Kasternakis, and Wineburg (1993) show that volunteers and nonvolunteers do not differ in their intrinsic religious motivation. Bekkers (2003) finds that volunteering directly varies with altruism, but altruism does not explain why church members volunteer more than nonmembers. By contrast, the social network explanation has received strong support (Becker and Dhingra 2001; Bekkers 2003; Jackson et al. 1995; Lam 2002; Park and Smith 2000; Yeung 2004). Empirical evidence suggests that church members have more active volunteers within their social networks. Consequently, church members are more likely to meet other volunteers and be recruited by them. Becker and Dhingra underline the power of this social network explanation stating "social networks, rather than beliefs, dominate as the mechanism leading to volunteering . . . the importance of religious beliefs plays little role in church attenders' decisions to volunteer" (2001:329–30). The fact that most volunteers were asked to join (Boraas 2003; Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995) is also in-line with the social network explanation.

The network explanation suggests the importance of church attendance. Regular churchgoers are more strongly connected to their religious group, making them more likely to be asked to volunteer. Most probably, this recruitment mechanism is considerably weaker for those church members who only occasionally visit church. This is exactly what De Hart (1999) and Bekkers (2003) find for the Netherlands: nonmembers and members who attend church infrequently

³ Wilson and Musick (1997) and Oesterle, Johnson, and Mortimer (2004) group these explanations under the following headings: (1) cultural, (2) social, and (3) human capital. We do not use these highly abstract terms, because their wide use have made their meaning unclear, which makes accumulation of knowledge difficult.

are almost equally less likely to volunteer, whereas church members who often visit church are much more likely to volunteer. Wuthnow also indicates this when he argues that "religious inclinations make very little difference unless one becomes involved in some kind of organized religious community" (1991:156). Because we expect church attendance to be highly influential, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 2: Differences in volunteering between church members and nonmembers decline strongly after taking church attendance into account.

Church members and nonmembers may differ considerably with regard to their volunteering, this does not make all members equally involved. Research shows large denominational differences among church members. In general, Protestants seem to volunteer more than Catholics (Curtis et al. 2001; Dekker and De Hart 2001; Lam 2002; Wuthnow 1991:322). Dekker and De Hart (2001) provide an institutional explanation: the Protestant church is less hierarchically structured than the Catholic church. Furthermore, the Protestant church subdivides into smaller parishes. Both the less hierarchical structure and the smaller subdivisions would generate more involvement. Lam (2002:408) argues that "Protestant principles discourage the pursuit of self-interests and induce a sense of social responsibility among their adherents." Based on these explanations, our next hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Protestants volunteer more than Catholics.

All previous hypotheses are about volunteering in general. However, it is reasonable to expect that religious involvement boosts volunteering for religious voluntary organizations to a larger extent than volunteering for secular organizations (Wuthnow 1999). Therefore, we have to study the impact of religious involvement on general volunteering apart from its effect on secular volunteering. However, the network explanation applies again. If those already involved in religious volunteering are more likely to get acquainted with people who volunteer for secular organizations, their chance to volunteer for secular organizations should be high as well. Jackson et al. (1995) and Dekker and De Hart (2002) find evidence for such a

spillover effect. On top of the network explanation, they add that people active in religious volunteering obtain specific skills that are valuable for secular voluntary organizations as well. This would make them more likely to be recruited by secular organizations, because organizations are actively "prospecting for participants" who have these skills (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999). Thus, the spillover hypothesis reads as follows:

Hypothesis 4a: People who do religious volunteer work are more likely to volunteer for secular organizations as well.

According to Wilson and Janoski (1995), some conservative Protestant denominations discourage secular volunteering. Volunteering for organizations that are directly linked to the church would be strongly supported though. Therefore, strong integration within these denominations should lower the chance to volunteer for secular organizations and raise the chance of religious volunteering. Consequently, there should be no spillover effect for these denominations. Park and Smith (2000) indeed find that high church attendance reduces the probability of volunteering through a nonchurch organization among churchgoing Protestants. However, since we cannot distinguish between different Protestant denominations within this study, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 4b: Conservative Protestants lower the overall spillover effect for Protestants compared to the spillover effect for other denominations.

HYPOTHESES ON NATIONAL RELIGIOUS CONTEXT AND VOLUNTEERING

So far, we have formulated hypotheses on the impact of individual religiosity on volunteering. Next, we elaborate on the relation between the national religious context and volunteer work. This relation is somewhat neglected in the literature. However, Kelley and De Graaf (1997) provide us with arguments to predict a positive impact of devoutness of a society. They find that people who were raised by secular parents in relatively devout countries are more religious than people who grew up with similar parents in more secular countries. According to Kelley and De Graaf, this comes about (a) through

people's exposure to religious culture and (b) because the pools of potential friends, teachers, colleagues, and marriage partners are predominantly devout. We expect that these two phenomena influence volunteering as well. As we have already argued, especially the social network of people influences their chance to volunteer. Under the assumption that people in devout countries have an increased number of religious people in their social networks, they likely acquaint themselves with an increased number of already active religious people who possibly recruit them for volunteer activities. Moreover, in such networks, the norm to volunteer could be stronger, as well as the social pressure to behave accordingly. Based on these arguments, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 5: The chance to volunteer increases with the devoutness of the society.

Furthermore, both theoretical arguments and empirical findings lead us to expect that the impact of individual church attendance on volunteering varies with the national religious context. Hypothesis 2 suggests that all people are influenced equally by church attendance. However, we argue that the impact is weaker in more devout societies and stronger in more secular societies. Kelley and De Graaf (1997) find similar cross-level interaction effects for religiosity: religious upbringing influences individual's religiosity in devout countries only marginally, whereas its effect is strong in secular societies. They argue that religious parents in secular societies have to invest more to inculcate religious beliefs in their children, whereas in devout societies, the religious context already produces much of this socialization. Consequently, the effect of parental religiosity is smaller in more religious contexts. As an analogy, we argue that frequent churchgoers in secular societies face the problem of insufficient volunteer involvement. Therefore, building up and sustaining vibrant voluntary organizations rest mainly on their shoulders.⁴ As a result, the chance to volunteer should be

strongly influenced by church attendance in secular societies. Conversely, in devout societies, if nonreligious people indeed have a higher chance to be involved in volunteering (see Hypothesis 5), this relieves avid churchgoers of the task to invest much time keeping levels of volunteering high. Besides, if levels of volunteering are already high, the added value of an additional volunteer is lower. Based on these arguments we expect the differences between frequent and infrequent churchgoers to be smaller, implying that church attendance does not strongly affect volunteering in devout societies. In sum, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 6: Individual church attendance influences volunteering less in more devout societies.

DATA AND METHODS

For the test of our hypotheses, we use a concatenated dataset from the 1981–1984, 1990–1993, and 1999–2001 waves of the European Values Surveys/World Values Surveys (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2005; World Values Study Group 1999). These waves contain similar questions on volunteering for seven types of organizations. Unfortunately, the third wave of the World Values Survey (1995–1997) cannot be used, because the questions on voluntary participation were changed too much. We select only those countries for which valid scores on all dependent and independent variables were available.⁵ Furthermore, only people between 18 and 90 years old are selected. These selections result in a dataset of 117,007 individuals distributed over 53 countries and the three waves. The distribution of all respondents over the countries and waves as well as average volunteer rates per country are displayed in Table 1.

⁴ We assume that networks of secular people do not negatively affect the voluntary participation of religious people in secular countries. This seems plausible, since absence of a norm to volunteer does not mean there exists a norm not to volunteer.

⁵ Because in the Chinese questionnaire, serious translation errors were made with respect to our dependent variable (see codebook for World Values Study Group 1999), we do not include the Chinese dataset.

Table 1. Respondents per Country and Wave and Percentage Volunteers per Country

Country	Respondents				Volunteers
	1981–1984	1990–1993	1999–2001	Total	Average %
Albania	—	—	904	904	42.1
Argentina	529	592	1,210	2,331	15.5
Austria	—	1,402	1,497	2,899	17.5
Belarus	—	—	977	977	14.9
Belgium	976	2,624	1,762	5,362	19.5
Brazil	—	1,460	—	1,460	21.2
Bulgaria	—	945	965	1,910	14.6
Canada	1,187	1,664	1,868	4,719	31.5
Chile	—	1,450	1,136	2,586	25.9
Croatia	—	—	912	912	15.5
Czech Republic	—	—	1,809	1,809	18.5
Denmark	1,181	1,008	999	3,188	14.5
Estonia	—	—	977	977	12.1
Finland	—	582	927	1,509	25.6
France	1,197	914	1,517	3,628	13.6
Germany	—	—	1,999	1,999	10.2
Germany (East)	—	1,325	—	1,325	28.2
Germany (West)	1,273	2,063	—	3,336	18.0
Greece	—	—	1,050	1,050	31.9
Hungary	—	666	973	1,639	12.2
Iceland	797	678	944	2,419	22.2
India	—	—	1,337	1,337	33.0
Ireland	1,180	995	934	3,109	17.4
Italy	1,345	1,964	1,926	5,235	17.5
Japan	1,167	960	1,257	3,384	11.2
Latvia	—	432	937	1,369	17.3
Lithuania	—	—	970	970	10.0
Luxembourg	—	—	1,005	1,005	20.1
Macedonia	—	—	1,055	1,055	25.1
Mexico	—	1,168	1,120	2,288	25.4
Moldova	—	—	1,008	1,008	31.7
Netherlands	1,116	1,002	991	3,109	25.7
Northern Ireland	310	302	926	1,538	17.1
Norway	1,208	1,180	—	2,388	20.6
Peru	—	—	1,395	1,395	33.5
Philippines	—	—	1,181	1,181	42.7
Poland	—	—	1,084	1,084	9.6
Portugal	—	1,080	895	1,975	11.7
Puerto Rico	—	—	551	551	41.7
Romania	—	1,089	1,051	2,140	17.5
Russia	—	1,654	2,450	4,104	9.9
Slovakia	—	—	1,327	1,327	31.7
Slovenia	—	934	966	1,900	13.7
South Africa	—	—	2,621	2,621	44.3
Spain	2,297	3,670	2,215	8,182	11.4
Sweden	832	922	948	2,702	29.2
Tanzania	—	—	844	844	74.2
Turkey	—	—	944	944	5.5
Uganda	—	—	975	975	57.1
UK	1,192	1,458	838	3,488	16.6
Ukraine	—	—	1,116	1,116	9.1
USA	2,214	1,536	1,135	4,885	38.4
Zimbabwe	—	—	859	859	58.9
Total	20,001	37,719	59,287	117,007	21.4

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Although the complete list of voluntary organizations differs over the three waves, all three waves contain similar questions on volunteering for seven different types of organizations. Respondents were asked whether they were doing unpaid work for one or more of the following organizations: (1) social welfare services for elderly, handicapped, or deprived people; (2) religious or church organizations; (3) education, arts, music, or cultural activities; (4) labor unions; (5) political parties or groups; (6) conservation, environment, and animal rights groups; and (7) professional associations. Because respondents were first asked whether they were members of these organizations, some scholars refer to the unpaid work with "working membership" (e.g., Curtis et al. 2001) rather than volunteering. However, others use exactly the same survey items and call it volunteering (e.g., Halman 2003; Hodgkinson 2003; Inglehart 2003; Parboteeah et al. 2004). Because we believe the items fit the aforementioned definition of volunteering, we refer to them as such. However, to determine whether results differ for memberships, we estimate our final models for volunteering as well as memberships.

We construct the variable general volunteering by assigning a score of 1 to respondents who did unpaid work for at least one of the seven organizations.⁶ We assign a score 0 to respondents who did not do any volunteer work. We use this dichotomous dependent variable (cf. Curtis, Grabb, and Bear 1992; Wuthnow 1999) instead of a count variable (cf. Curtis et al. 2001; Parboteeah et al. 2004) for two reasons. First, our hypotheses pertain to the chance of volunteering and not the number of organizations. Second, a count variable does not necessarily correspond to level of involvement. People who are involved in two or more voluntary organizations do not automatically invest more time than someone who volunteers for a single organization.

Although there exists considerable variation over the waves, countries with high volunteer rates in one wave generally also have high rates in the other waves. The Pearson *R* correlation between the volunteer rates in 1981–1984 with those of 1990–1993 is .75 (*N* = 17), for 1990–1993 and 1999–2001 it is .65 (*N* = 26), and for 1981–1984 and 1999–2001 it is .67 (*N* = 15). Averaged for all countries and waves, 21.4 percent of the respondents are active volunteers.

For the variable nonreligious volunteering, we exclude volunteer work for religious and church organizations from general volunteering.⁷ Since most volunteer work is done in religious organizations (over 46 percent of all volunteering for the seven different organizations is done for religious organizations), general volunteering and nonreligious volunteering are far from identical.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Basic descriptive statistics of the independent variables are displayed in Table 2. Church membership is measured by the question whether people belong to a religious denomination, and if so, which one. Question formulation differed somewhat between wave 1981–1984 and waves 1990–1993 and 1999–2001. Also, in some countries, different answer categories were used. However, we are able to assign respondents to the following four categories: Catholics, Protestants, non-Christians, and nonreligious.⁸ Originally the answer categories for the question on church attendance (apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings) ranged from "(practically) never" to "more than once a week." We recode that ordinal variable to the

⁷ For *nonreligious voluntary memberships*, we exclude memberships of religious organizations from *voluntary memberships*.

⁸ Church membership should not be confused with membership of a religious organization. We thank one of the anonymous reviewers for providing the following clear example. Being a member of the Catholic church is really different from belonging to the Knights of Columbus. In fact, of all church members in our dataset (Catholics, Protestants, and non-Christians) only 23 percent is a member of a religious organization and only 12 percent volunteers for such an organization.

⁶ *Voluntary membership* is constructed similarly based on the seven items pertaining to the question on memberships which preceded the question on unpaid work.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Individual level variables: ^a			
Sex (female = 1)	0–1	.53	.50
Education	0–9	5.39	3.01
Age	18–90	42.72	16.84
Age-squared	324–8,100	2,108.87	1,585.98
Married	0–1	.59	.49
Cohabiting	0–1	.04	.19
Divorced	0–1	.06	.24
Widow	0–1	.07	.26
Single	0–1	.23	.42
Catholic	0–1	.49	.50
Protestant	0–1	.22	.41
Non-Christian	0–1	.07	.25
Nonreligious	0–1	.22	.42
Church attendance	0–104	19.19	30.88
Contextual level variables: ^b			
Average church attendance	2.13–69.74	19.14	14.79
GDP/capita (US\$1,000)	.48–44.01	14.68	7.91
Level of democracy	4–14	11.93	2.76
Welfare state expenditure (% of GNP)	.00– 42.80	19.46	9.73

^a Averages and standard deviations are calculated over all 117,007 individuals.
^b Averages and standard deviations are calculated over 96 country-wave combinations for all but welfare state expenditure for which they are calculated over 83 country-wave combinations

approximate number of times someone visits church per year. This variable ranges from 0 to 104, which corresponds to no visits at all and two visits a week, respectively.

For every unique country-wave combination we average church attendance to obtain a measure for the religiosity of the country. Note that this variable actually varies over the waves. Countries with a high average church attendance are relatively religious, whereas countries that score low on average church attendance are relatively secular.

Next to the variables that are relevant for testing our hypotheses, we include sex, age, educational level, and marital status at the individual level in our analyses. Women appear to volunteer more than men in the United States (Boraas 2003; Hayghe 1991), whereas in Europe the picture is less clear. In some European countries women are more involved while in others men contribute more (Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995). Men and women might differ because they are differently integrated in family, church, and work. Women are more involved in caring tasks, attend churches more often, but they less often have a job. Consequently, their social networks differ from men. Education is reported to

have a strong positive impact on volunteering (Wilson 2000). We use the question at which age respondents finished their fulltime education. The answers are recoded to a variable ranging from 0 (at the age of 12) to 9 (at 21 or older). Age is measured in years. We also include a quadratic term for age, because the relation between age and civic participation could be curvilinear (Boraas 2003; Curtis et al. 1992; Knoke and Thomson 1977). Middle-aged people would be most active because they are more strongly integrated in work and family than the young and old (Wilson 2000). Similar differences are found between the married and unmarried. Married people in the United States volunteer more than unmarried people (Sundeen 1990; Wilson 2000). Again, for Europe these differences are less clear-cut (Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995). We control for marital status because it might differ significantly over religious groups and countries. We distinguish married, cohabiting, divorced, widowed, and single people.

At the contextual level, we also include national economic development measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Laspeyres index, US\$ in 1996 constant prices)

which we obtain from Heston, Summers, and Aten (2002).⁹ In the literature (cf. Curtis et al. 2001; Halman 2003), two arguments for a positive effect of economic development on level of volunteering can be found. First, it is argued that economic development leads to occupational specialization resulting in more diverse interest groups in which people would participate voluntarily. Second, affluent countries would provide people with more resources (e.g., time and training) necessary to participate. However, results are mixed. Parboteeah et al. (2004) do find a positive effect of gross national product (GNP) per capita, whereas Curtis et al. (2001) do not find a significant effect of the natural logarithm of GDP per capita on working memberships. Although Halman (2003) does find a positive bivariate relation between GDP per capita and level of volunteering, it appears to be spurious after taking other contextual characteristics into account. Country characteristics that turn out to be conducive to volunteering in Halman's analysis are years of continuous democracy and level of democracy. It is assumed that democracies provide the infrastructure (e.g., freedom of speech and the right to assemble) necessary for voluntary organizations to flourish. We do not use years of continuous democracy, because for many countries it is linearly related to year of survey. However, the variable for level of democracy is included. It is measured with the Gastil Index (Freedom House 2005).¹⁰ We sum the scores on "political rights"

and "civil liberties" and reverse the scale. This results in a scale ranging from 2 to 14.

Another possibly relevant context is implied by the crowding out hypothesis: collective welfare state arrangements would crowd out volunteering because they provide substitutes for individual efforts to provide collective goods (Menchik and Weisbrod 1987; Arts, Halman, and Van Oorschot 2003; Salamon and Sokolowski 2003). However, the opposite has also been argued. According to the interdependence theory, more state involvement in social welfare activities would lead to more volunteering because voluntary organizations would in fact be supported by the state (Salamon and Sokolowski 2003). Although a lot of research on the influence of the welfare state uses the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990), we use a real measure for welfare state investment (cf. Salamon and Sokolowski 2003). The International Labour Organisation provides us with such a measure, the percentage of the Gross National Product spent on social security (International Labour Office 1968–1996).¹¹ This measure has four advantages over the use of Esping-Andersen's typology. First, the typology is based on decommodification measures, which suffer from methodological weaknesses (Van Voorhis 2002). Second, the data vary not only by country but also over time, whereas the typology remains fixed. Therefore, variations in volunteering between waves might be better explained with our measure. Third, this measure suits the theory better, since the degree in which the welfare state is developed is central to the hypothesis and because more welfare state arrangements require more social security expenditure. Fourth, Esping-Andersen's typology can not easily be applied to countries outside his original sample, whereas data on social security expenditure are available for many more countries. However, because information on welfare state expenditures is not available for all 53 countries in our dataset, we

⁹ GDP per capita scores are unavailable for exactly the right years for the following countries. Therefore, we use the scores from the years in parentheses instead: Bulgaria (1991), Malta (1998), Puerto Rico (1998), Russia (1991), Singapore (1996), and Vietnam (1997). Although Penn World Tables 6.1 does not distinguish East and West Germany anymore, these regions are distinguished in WVS, and they have had radically different policies on religion in the past. Therefore, we decide to maintain the country distinction and estimate GDP per capita figures based of Penn World Tables 5.6 data.

¹⁰ No scores are available for exactly the right years for the following countries. We therefore use the scores for the years in parentheses: East Germany (1989), Latvia (1991), Russia (1991), Slovenia (1991), and West Germany (1989).

¹¹ Because these data are unavailable for some countries for the years 1981, 1990, we calculate them on the basis of linear inter- and extrapolation of long term trends. All data for 2000 are based on linear extrapolation of the trends. Curve estimation per country show that linear trends are good approximations of the true developments.

report the results based on 42 countries in a separate section after the analyses on our complete sample.¹²

Correlations between the contextual variables show that more prosperous countries are generally more democratic ($R = .60$; $N = 96$), less religious ($R = -.29$; $N = 96$), and spend more on social security ($R = .58$; $N = 83$). More democratic societies are less religious ($R = -.24$; $N = 96$) and have more extensive welfare states ($R = .43$; $N = 83$). Extensive welfare states appear to be less religious ($R = -.40$; $N = 83$).

Since we hypothesize individual and contextual level effects as well as cross-level interaction effects, we use multilevel analyses techniques (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992; Snijders and Bosker 1999). Because our data consist of repeated cross-sectional surveys, we distinguish three levels (cf. Duncan, Jones and Moon 1996; Subramanian, Jones, and Duncan 2003): level 1 is the lowest level and consists of the individual respondents; level 2 comprises the survey waves within countries; and level 3 is composed of the countries.

For the estimation of our models we use the statistical program HLM, version 6.02a (Raudenbush et al. 2004). Because we want to explain the probability of volunteering and our dependent variables are dichotomous, we estimate hierarchical logistic regression models. The procedure we use is penalized quasi-likelihood estimation and all but the dummy variables are mean-centered in the analyses.

RESULTS

GENERAL VOLUNTEERING

We start our analyses with the estimation of the null model with random intercepts only (not shown in Table 3). From the null model it is clear that the probability of volunteering varies over countries and survey waves.

In model 1, we include church membership and test whether the probability to volunteer differs among religious denominations. Because Hypothesis 1 focuses on the difference between

church members and nonmembers, we set the nonreligious as reference category. By doing so, the beta parameters for the religious groups should be interpreted in terms of how much the logit deviates from the one for nonreligious people. Next to church membership all control variables are added.

All religious affiliates appear to be much more likely to volunteer than the nonreligious, which supports Hypothesis 1. Moreover, there are large differences among the denominations. Clearly, Protestants have a higher expected probability to volunteer (.31) than Catholics (.25), which corroborates Hypothesis 3.¹³ Non-Christians (.32) are equally engaged in volunteer work as Protestants (differences between them are not significant), whereas the nonreligious (.20) have a considerably lower probability to volunteer.

Besides the clear effect of church membership, the control variables are influential as well. The chance of volunteering increases strongly with educational level. As expected, the relation between age and volunteering is curvilinear. However, the effect of age cannot simply be interpreted as life course effects, since cohort explanations could be involved. Putnam (2000) argues that declining levels of volunteering might be due to cohort effects, i.e. older birth cohorts are more active than younger cohorts. This might partly explain the positive effect of age. The effect of marital status is also as expected. Married people are the most active volunteers compared with cohabiting, divorced, or widowed individuals, but singles are similarly active.

In model 2, we include church attendance and allow its effect to vary for countries (level 3) and waves (level 2). In general, attending religious ceremonies influences the chance of volunteering considerably. People who attend church twice a week are more than 5 ($\exp(104 \times .016)$) times more likely to volunteer than people who never visit church.¹⁴ However,

¹³ Expected probabilities of volunteering are calculated for married men with average age (42.7 years) and average educational level (5.4).

¹⁴ Note that originally the church attendance variable was ordinal. So, be careful when interpreting the effect of a single day increase. We checked whether the positive effect of church attendance is less strong at the higher end of the scale. Indeed, we found evi-

¹² Data are unavailable for Albania, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Puerto Rico, Slovenia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Table 3. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Models for General Volunteering and Voluntary Memberships

	General Volunteering					Voluntary Membership
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5A	Model 5B
Intercept	-1.570*** (.094)	-1.271*** (.085)	-1.278*** (.077)	-1.326*** (.072)	-1.317*** (.073)	-.241* (.096)
Level-1 Variables:						
Sex (female = 1)	-.003 (.030)	-.103*** (.030)	-.104*** (.030)	-.105*** (.031)	-.104*** (.032)	-.214*** (.030)
Education	.113*** (.008)	.116*** (.007)	.116*** (.007)	.118*** (.007)	.118*** (.007)	.113*** (.006)
Age	.059*** (.005)	.062*** (.004)	.062*** (.004)	.063*** (.004)	.063*** (.005)	.061*** (.004)
Age-sq. (×100)	-.054*** (.005)	-.061*** (.005)	-.061*** (.005)	-.062*** (.005)	-.062*** (.005)	-.063*** (.005)
Married (ref.)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cohabiting	-.273*** (.078)	-.184** (.065)	-.184** (.065)	-.191** (.068)	-.191** (.069)	-.039 (.057)
Divorced	-.144*** (.032)	-.080** (.029)	-.081** (.029)	-.082** (.031)	-.083** (.031)	-.093** (.033)
Widow	-.105** (.034)	-.144*** (.031)	-.144*** (.031)	-.145*** (.033)	-.148*** (.033)	-.072* (.029)
Single	-.013 (.038)	-.016 (.030)	-.016 (.030)	-.018 (.031)	-.018 (.032)	-.068* (.034)
Nonreligious (ref.)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Catholic	.335*** (.041)	.018 (.035)	.018 (.035)	.020 (.037)	.018 (.038)	.030 (.039)
Protestant	.631*** (.080)	.305*** (.050)	.307*** (.050)	.313*** (.052)	.310*** (.053)	.477*** (.054)
Non-Christian	.646*** (.116)	.259** (.097)	.260** (.097)	.266** (.104)	.263** (.104)	.339*** (.096)
Church attendance		.016*** (.001)	.016*** (.001)	.017*** (.001)	.017*** (.001)	.013*** (.001)
Level-2 Variables:						
GDP/capita	—	—	.011 (.009)	.014 (.009)	.015 (.009)	.030* (.012)
Level of democracy	—	—	-.051* (.023)	-.054* (.023)	-.057* (.023)	-.059 (.031)
Average church attendance	—	—	—	.018*** (.006)	.017** (.006)	.003 (.006)
Cross-Level Interactions:						
Average church attendance × Church attendance (×100)	—	—	—	—	-.027*** (.005)	-.014* (.006)
Variance components:						
Level-2 variance	.137***	.138***	.124***	.123***	.127***	.301***
Level-3 variance	.385***	.294***	.307***	.234***	.231***	.396***
Random effect Church	—	.004***	.004***	.004***	.004***	.036***
attendance level-2 (×1000)						
Random effect Church	—	.052***	.052***	.053***	.030***	.043***
attendance level-3 (×1000)						

Note: Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. N₁ = 117,007; N₂ = 96; N₃ = 53.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests).

the effect of church attendance varies over countries and waves. It can be calculated that the most frequent churchgoers are—depending on the specific country-wave combination—between 1.2 ($\exp(104 \times .002)$) to 24.7 ($\exp(104 \times .031)$) times more likely to volunteer than people who never go to church.¹⁵ This means that, at one extreme, church attendance does not influence volunteering much; in those countries, frequently attending church does not really increase the probability to volunteer. At the other extreme, church attendance has a strong impact on volunteering; in those countries, frequent churchgoers are much more likely to volunteer than people who do not go to church at all.

After controlling for church attendance, the effect of church membership drops considerably. The expected probability to volunteer is the same for Catholics and nonreligious people who attend church equally often.¹⁶ The effects for Protestants and non-Christians are still substantial but half as strong as in model 1. Apparently, the differences in volunteering between religious and nonreligious people are for a large part due to differences in church attendance. This supports Hypothesis 2. However, not all differences between the religious denominations disappear. Even after controlling for church attendance, Protestants are still more likely to volunteer than Catholics, which supports Hypothesis 3. The parameter estimates of all control variables, except the one for sex, do not change much. Women are slightly less active in volunteer work than men. Because they visit church more often than

dence for such a curvilinear effect. However, because it resulted only in a slight adjustment of the expected probabilities to volunteer, we decided not to present it in our models. The additional analyses are available upon request.

¹⁵ This calculation is based on the fact that the estimated beta parameter is assumed to be normally distributed. Therefore, 95 percent of all beta parameters are between ± 1.96 times the standard deviation. So, $.016 \pm 1.96 \times (.000004 + .000052)$ ⁵ gives a range of $[-.002 ; .031]$.

¹⁶ In our large dataset we have a considerable number of people who say that they do not belong to a church but still visit church often (table available upon request).

men, this difference was not visible in model 1.

When we add GDP per capita and level of democracy in model 3, all other effects are virtually unchanged. The effect of level of democracy is contrary to the theoretical expectation. People appear to volunteer more in less democratic societies. This contradicts findings by Halman (2003) and Parboteeah et al. (2004). Halman finds a positive effect for years of continuous democracy as well as political rights (subscale of the Gastil Index used here). However, his analysis is restricted to European countries (a subset of the dataset we use) and he does not distinguish individual level from contextual level effects. Consequently, the smaller variation in level of democracy in his dataset as well as compositional differences between the countries could distort his results. Parboteeah et al. find a significant positive effect of degree of liberal democracy as well, but their analysis is also restricted to a smaller sample of countries.¹⁷ We do not find a significant effect of economic development.¹⁸ This is in line with Curtis et al. (2001) and Halman (2003), but contradicts Parboteeah et al. (2004).

Model 4 shows that the national religious context has an additional positive effect. People living in the most devout country are, according to the model, almost four times ($\exp(69.74 \times .018) / \exp(2.13 \times .018)$) more likely to volunteer than people living in the most secular country. This supports Hypothesis 5. Consequently, people who never visit church

¹⁷ To test whether our larger sample with more variation in level of democracy causes us to find a negative effect of level of democracy contrary to findings by Halman (2003) and Parboteeah et al. (2004), we reestimated model 5A on two subsets of countries. Our sample has 31 and 16 countries in common with the analyses of Halman and Parboteeah et al. respectively. Indeed, results from these subsets differed considerably from model 5A. The sign of the effect of level of democracy was positive but it did not reach significance in both subsets. Other modeling differences were probably the reason why the effects in these subsets did not reach significance.

¹⁸ We also checked whether an increase of national wealth matters more for poor countries than for richer countries by including a quadratic term. Again, no significant results were found.

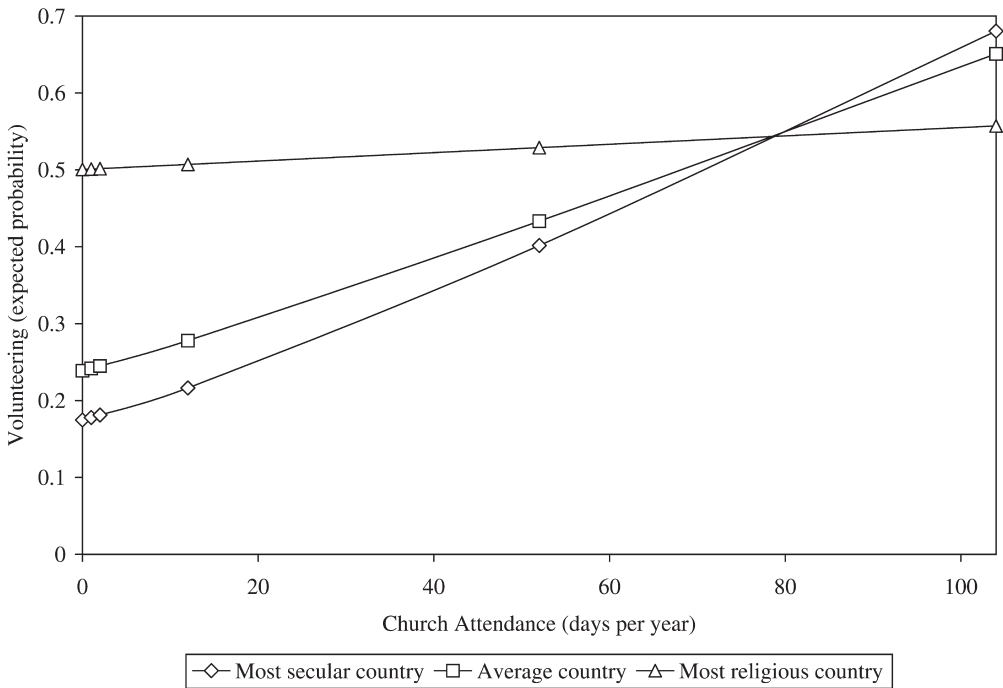


Figure 1. Effect of Church Attendance on General Volunteering

but live in a devout country have a higher probability to volunteer than similar people in secular societies. The voluntary participation of these nonreligious people is, in effect, elevated in more devout countries. A dynamic interpretation of this result would imply that change in the national religious context causes change in volunteer rates.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the World Values Survey data are not really suitable for a trend analysis to test this claim because the number of items on voluntary associations differs over the survey waves. This has unknown consequences for the estimation of volunteer rates based on items that remained the same over all waves. Besides, for half the countries only one survey wave is available. However, the fact that not only variance at level 3 but also variance at level 2 declines (albeit only marginally) when average church attendance is

added to the model is in line with a dynamic interpretation. We agree that this is not strong evidence, but we lack the data to provide a more rigorous test. However, if the dynamic interpretation holds, declining volunteer rates should not come as a surprise when societies continue to secularize.

In model 5, we test whether the effect of church attendance varies with the national religious context. As can be seen, the effect of church attendance is smaller in more devout countries. This implies that the differences between secular and devout people are substantially smaller in religious countries than in secular countries. This corroborates Hypothesis 6. The effects of the religious context and the cross-level interaction are depicted in Figure 1. This graph shows that church attendance barely affects general volunteering in the most devout country, whereas the impact is strongly positive in the most secular society. The interaction effect suggests that religious people who live in secularizing countries might become more active in volunteering. So, if the dynamic interpretation of the national religious context effect and the cross-level interaction effect holds, increased civic

¹⁹ We stress that this is a *ceteris paribus* argumentation. Not only new predictors might become relevant in the future, but declining volunteer rates caused by secularization might also to some extent be compensated by for example rising levels of education.

participation of religious people might compensate for the secularization effect.²⁰

In order to test whether these effects exist only for specific organizations, we estimated separate models for all seven types of organizations. Although we do not present these seven separate models here, it should be stressed that for all but one type of organization, we found both religious context and cross-level interaction effects (results available from author upon request). Only for trade unions, neither individual church attendance nor the national religious context affected volunteering.

MEMBERSHIPS VERSUS VOLUNTEERING

In order to examine whether determinants of voluntary memberships differ from the ones we find for volunteering, we reestimate model 5A for voluntary memberships. Results are displayed in the last column of Table 3 (model 5B). Although some effects differ, similarities at level 1 are striking. When we turn to level 2 however, some substantial differences stand out. Levels of voluntary memberships are not at all affected by the national religious context. Apparently, these looser ties to civic organizations are not influenced by the religious context, whereas the stronger ties of volunteers are. This fits the network theory, because getting people to volunteer requires more recruitment effort than just signing someone up. For memberships, economic development appears to be important though. In more prosperous societies people are more likely to join voluntary associations. The fact that we do not find this effect for volunteering is in accordance with Putnam's (2000) claim that 'checkbook memberships' might have risen in Western societies. In affluent societies more people are just nominal members of voluntary organizations without being actively involved in volunteering. Again, we find a negative effect of level of democracy, which is contrary to findings by Curtis et al. (2001). However, it does not reach significance. Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001) also

find a negative though nonsignificant effect for democracy. They argue that their effects might reach significance in a larger sample; a claim we are unable to support.

SPILLOVER

For the test of the spillover hypothesis we estimate different models, which are displayed in Table 4. Although model 6 looks quite similar to model 3 in Table 3, we change two aspects. First, the dependent variable under consideration is now nonreligious volunteering. Second, we change the reference category for church membership to Protestants in order to test whether the spillover effect is smaller for Protestants than for other denominations.

From model 6 it follows that people from different denominations (the nonreligious included) are equally involved in volunteering for nonreligious organizations when controlling for church attendance. Consequently, all residual denominational differences in model 3 (Table 3) are caused by differences in religious volunteering.

In model 7, we include religious volunteer work as a predictor for nonreligious volunteering. It has a strong positive effect. People who are involved in religious volunteering are almost 3.6 ($\exp(1.281)$) times more likely to do non-religious volunteer work as well. This is in line with the spillover Hypothesis 4a. Although we cannot be sure that participation in religious volunteering actually causes people to start volunteering for other organizations as well, we believe that if spillover really happens, the direction of causation seems most plausible. Because most volunteer work is done for religious organizations, it is unlikely that the direction is the other way around.

When Catholics volunteer for religious organizations, they are, compared to Protestants, more likely to do nonreligious volunteer work as well. Model 8A shows that Catholics who are active in religious volunteering are over 4 ($\exp(1.059 + .351)$) times more likely to volunteer for nonreligious organizations than Catholics who are not volunteering for religious organizations. For Protestants, this spillover effect is considerably smaller, which is in accordance with Hypothesis 4b. Protestants who are active in religious volunteering, are almost 3 ($\exp(1.059)$) times more likely to do

²⁰ Although, we have three surveys over the period 1981–2001 for some countries, the parameter estimate for the interaction effect is based predominantly on differences between countries. This makes the empirical support for the dynamic interpretation of the cross-level interaction effect less strong.

Table 4. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Models for NRV and NRV Memberships

	NRV			NRV Memberships
	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8A	Model 8B
Intercept	-1.558*** (.074)	-1.855*** (.069)	-1.780*** (.067)	-.594*** (.094)
Level-1 Variables:				
Sex (female = 1)	-.161*** (.036)	-.174*** (.038)	-.176*** (.038)	-.314*** (.031)
Education	.143*** (.007)	.143*** (.007)	.143*** (.007)	.138*** (.008)
Age	.064*** (.005)	.062*** (.006)	.062*** (.006)	.072*** (.005)
Age-sq. (×100)	-.063*** (.006)	-.060*** (.006)	-.060*** (.006)	-.075*** (.006)
Married (ref.)	—	—	—	—
Cohabiting	-.134 (.066)	-.111 (.068)	-.111 (.068)	.031 (.054)
Divorced	-.038 (.032)	-.015 (.032)	-.016 (.032)	-.057 (.033)
Widow	-.160*** (.043)	-.150** (.047)	-.150** (.047)	-.128*** (.028)
Single	.005 (.030)	.015 (.029)	.011 (.029)	-.049 (.032)
Protestant (ref.)	—	—	—	—
Catholics	-.032 (.038)	.069 (.037)	-.038 (.042)	-.126*** (.034)
Non-Christian	.018 (.085)	.066 (.085)	-.008 (.116)	-.085 (.128)
Nonreligious	-.007 (.044)	.133** (.048)	.052 (.046)	.019 (.037)
Church attendance	.006*** (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	-.002*** (.000)
Religious volunteer work (yes = 1)	—	1.281*** (.074)	1.059*** (.065)	—
Membership religious organization (yes = 1)	—	—	—	.665*** (.044)
Level-1 Interactions:				
Catholic × Religious volunteer work	—	—	.351*** (.087)	—
Catholic × Membership religious organization	—	—	—	.255*** (.058)
Non-Christian × Religious volunteer work	—	—	.201 (.201)	—
Non-Christian × Membership religious organization	—	—	—	.223 (.230)
Nonreligious × Religious volunteer work	—	—	.270 (.155)	—
Nonreligious × Membership religious organization	—	—	—	.020 (.080)
Variance components:				
Level-2 variance	.141***	.131***	.132***	.220***
Level-3 variance	.180***	.108***	.102***	.353***
Random effect Church attendance level 2 (×1000)	.007***	.011***	.011***	.001***
Random effect Church attendance level-3 (×1000)	.017***	.011***	.011***	.015***

Note: Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. N₁ = 117,007; N₂ = 96; N₃ = 53. NRV = nonreligious volunteering.

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed tests).

nonreligious volunteer work than those who are not active. Although the parameters for the non-Christians and the nonreligious are positive, they do not reach significance. So, the spillover effect is equally strong for Protestants, non-Christians, and the nonreligious. This refutes Hypothesis 4b. We conclude that the spillover effect is stronger for Catholics than for the other denominations.

Whether members of religious voluntary organizations are also more likely to join nonreligious voluntary organizations is tested in model 8B. We reestimate model 8A but replace religious volunteer work with membership of a religious voluntary organization and change the dependent variable to nonreligious voluntary memberships. Clearly, the spillover effect is not limited to volunteering. Joining a nonreligious voluntary organization is more likely among members of religious voluntary organizations than among nonmembers of religious voluntary organizations. Interestingly, it shows that Catholics who are not a member of a religious voluntary organization are less likely to join nonreligious voluntary organizations than Protestants. However, if they have joined a religious voluntary organization, their chance to be a member of a nonreligious organization is increased and even higher than that of Protestants. Again, the spillover effect is lowest for Protestants. Furthermore, the fact that we find a small but negative effect for church attendance indicates that frequent churchgoers are slightly less likely to join nonreligious voluntary organizations than those who rarely attend church. Note however, that this effect is controlled for membership of a religious voluntary organization, something for which the chance is in fact strongly increased by church attendance.

VOLUNTEERING AND THE WELFARE STATE

To test the crowding-out hypothesis, we added social security expenditure to model 5A from Table 3. Because these data were unavailable for 11 countries, the analysis was limited to 104,555 respondents distributed over 42 countries.²¹ The effect of welfare state expenditure was all but

significant and in sign even opposed to what is expected from the crowding-out hypothesis. However, this does not support the alternative interdependence theory either. Although Salamon and Sokolowski (2003) do find support for the interdependence theory, they control neither for compositional differences between the countries nor for possible confounding factors at the country level. In our analysis, most other parameters were similar to the ones from model 5A. However, the countries for which we lacked welfare state expenditure data were on average less democratic. Leaving them out of the analysis reduced the variance in level of democracy considerably, which caused the effect of level of democracy to be non-significant.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this article, we study the impact of individual religiosity, the national religious context, and their interplay on volunteering. Curtis et al. (2001) show in their general study on contextual determinants of associational involvement that working memberships (religious organizations and unions excluded) vary with the national religious composition. We provide new hypotheses about the influence of religion by combining previous research on social networks and volunteering (Becker and Dhingra 2001; Bekkers 2003; Jackson et al. 1995; Lam 2002; Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000; Park and Smith 2000; Yeung 2004) with a study on the impact of both parental religiosity and the national religious context on individual religiosity (Kelley and De Graaf 1997). These new hypotheses are tested on a large dataset containing information on volunteering for 53 countries in the period 1981-2001.

This study not only demonstrates that frequent churchgoers volunteer more, it also shows that there is an additional positive effect of devoutness of society: religious context matters. Interestingly, individual and contextual effects strongly interact. The differences between secular and devout people are substantially smaller in religious countries than in secular countries. Our findings imply that individual religiosity is hardly relevant for volunteering in devout nations.

Level of democracy affects volunteering, but contrary to the expectation, people in less dem-

²¹ We do not present the results of this analysis in a separate table; they are available upon request.

ocratic societies volunteer more. We are not sure how to interpret this result. One reason might be that the less democratic societies included in our dataset have less extensive welfare states and therefore citizens of those countries provide for certain public goods themselves. This explanation builds of course on the crowding-out hypothesis, which we cannot corroborate in this study. We are unable to test the explanation because welfare state expenditures for most of these countries are missing.

We do not find significant effects for economic development on volunteering. However, in our analysis on voluntary memberships GDP per capita shows a significant effect. In more prosperous societies, people join more organizations. Because we do not find this effect for volunteering, it seems that checkbook memberships are more common in wealthy nations (cf. Putnam 2000).

If secularization is an ongoing process in rich post-industrial societies, we expect declining levels of volunteering due to composition and context effects. We find that differences over time are to some extent explained by differences in national religious context, which supports this expectation. Of course secularization theory is contested (e.g., Iannaccone 1998; Stark 1999; Stark and Finke 2000). Yet there is a large body of evidence showing that church attendance, an important indicator in the secularization debate, has indeed been declining over the past decades in most rich post-industrial countries (e.g., Norris and Inglehart 2004). Furthermore, the dynamic interpretation of our results implies that change in the national religious context causes change in volunteer rates. Although we are unable to provide strong evidence for this interpretation, the results suggest that diminished civic involvement goes hand in hand with ongoing secularization. However, the cross-level interaction effect suggests that religious people who live in secularizing countries might have an increased chance to volunteer. So, if the dynamic interpretation holds, increased volunteering of religious people could compensate for the secularization effect. Interestingly, Kelley and De Graaf (1997) also show that family religiosity is more important for the religiosity of children in secular nations than in devout nations. In a secular context, parents have to invest more to keep their children religious.

Similarly, religious people have to invest more in volunteering when a nation secularizes.

Furthermore, religious volunteering seems to have a strong spillover effect. This implies that religious people are also more involved in volunteering for secular organizations. Consequently, secularization could even cause declining participation in secular organizations. This spillover effect is strongest for Catholics. Unfortunately the World Values Survey data do not allow us to distinguish specific groups of Protestants to test whether especially conservative Protestants refrain from secular volunteering as suggested by Wilson and Janoski (1995).

Without doubt, the quality of the data differs over the 96 surveys involved in this study. For this reason, we carefully tried to find countries that might be influential outliers. However, whatever country was excluded, we could not find substantial changes in our results. An analysis on a subsection of the complete dataset to test the welfare state hypothesis shows that the results are robust. Keep in mind though that only 7 percent of the data population is non-Christian and that questions pertaining to religion in the World Values Surveys might be better applicable to Christians than to non-Christians. Therefore, we cannot make strong claims with respect to non-Christian countries. However, we did a preliminary test to see whether results are different for non-Christian countries. We reestimated model 5A with a dummy variable for non-Christian countries included at level 3 as well as an cross-level interaction between this dummy and church attendance at level 1.²² Results show that people living in non-Christian countries volunteer to the same extent as people in Christian countries (results available from author upon request). The effect of church attendance is only slightly smaller in non-Christian societies. This test is not ideal, but since the number of countries participating in the World Values Surveys increases with every wave, we hope that future

²² In India, Japan, Tanzania, and Turkey, the non-Christians form the largest group. For these countries the dummy variable was set to 1. In all other countries, at least 75 percent of the population claims to be either Protestant, Catholic, or nonreligious, and therefore the dummy variable was set to 0.

research can provide stronger tests for non-Christian countries as well.

In this study, we show that network theory especially provides important arguments for predicting volunteering behavior of both religious and nonreligious people. Network theory predicts that all people in devout countries have more religious people within their social networks. Consequently, nonreligious people should get to know more active religious people who could recruit them. Furthermore, in such networks the norm to volunteer could be stronger, as well as the social pressure to behave accordingly. Although we lack actual network data, analyses of our large scale international dataset show that national religiosity strongly affects volunteering behavior of nonreligious people. Also, the impact of church attendance on volunteering is much smaller in devout nations. Apparently, theoretical progress can be made for cross-national differences in volunteering. Further research to test the actual recruitment mechanisms in social networks would require network data collection in international surveys.

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